

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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P R 180711Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1479

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 5361

EXDIS

DEPT PASS CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, JA

SUBJECT: MIYAZAWA VISIT AND KIM TAE-CHUNG CASE

REF: SEOUL 5272

1. DURING JULY 18 MEETING WITH FONMIN KIM TONG-CHO, AMBASSADOR ASKED ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR MIYAZAWA VISIT TO SEOUL.

2. KIM REPLIED THJR JAPANESE WERE REQUIRING, AS CONDITION FOR VISIT, THAT KOREANS GIVE THEM NOTE VERBALE ACKNOWLEDGING MISCONDUCT OF FORMER ROK EMBOFF KIM TONG-UN WITH RESPECT TO KIM TAE-CHUNG KIDNAP

CASE (REFTEL). FONMIN SAID THAT NOTE VERBALE HAD BEEN WORKED OUT BETWEEN KCIA AND JAPANESE POLICE AND HE HAD LEARNED OF IT IN DETAIL ONLY THROUGH JAPANESE AMBASSADOR IN SEOUL, NISHIYAMA. KIN SAID THAT THIS WAS MATTER FOR TWO COUNTRIES' FOREIGN MINISTRIES TO SETTLE AND NOT INTELLIGENCE OR POLICE ORGANS. MOREOVER, HE FELT THAT CONTENT OF NOTE, WHICH WAS DEMEANING TO KOREA, WOULD BECOME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE THROUGH PRESS LEAKS. KIM DID NOT SAY SO SPECIFICALLY, BUT HE INTIMATED THAT HE WAS HOLDING UP DELIVERY OF NOTE.

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3. AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED HOPE KIM WAS NOT PERMITTING AN INTERNAL ROKG JURISDICTIONAL DISPUTE INTERFERE WITH THE LARGER QUESTION OF IMPROVED ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS, WHICH WAS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO KOREA, AS WELL AS TO THE UNITED STATES. AS FOR THE CONTENT OF THE NOTE, IT WAS THE AMBASSADOR'S UNDERSTANDING THAT IT PUT THE BLAME ON KIM TONG-UN AND THEREFORE WOULD NOT BE SEEN AS FURTHER HARMING THE ROKG'S STATURE. BESIDES, IF THE TWO AGENCIES MOST CLOSELY INVOLVED IN THE CASE, THE KCIA AND THE JAPANESE POLICE, COULD AGREE ON A FINAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM, OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES SHOULD NOT STAND IN THE WAY. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT THE JAPANESE WERE GAINING A NEW SENSE OF IMPORTANCE OF KOREA TO JAPAN'S SECURITY AND THE TIME WAS PROPITIOUS FOR A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS. KIM TAE-CHUNG CASE SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO OBSTRUCT SUCH PROGRESS. THE FONMIN WAS NON-COMMITTAL IN HIS REPLY.

4. COMMENT: JAPANESE SPECULATION ABOUT KIM'S FOOT DRAGGING ON THE KIM TAE-CHUNG CASE (REFTEL) TURNS OUT TO BE CORRECT. KIM APPEARS TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY OUT OF STEP WITH THE REST OF HIS GOVERNMENT ON ROK-JAPAN RELATIONF, A POINT WHICH PROBABLY CONTRIBUTES TO INCIPIENT RUMORS THAT HIS DAYS AS MINISTER MAY BE NUMBERED.
SNEIDER

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CINCPAC.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MINISTERIAL VISITS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, TRIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SEOUL05361
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750248-0505
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750742/aaaablkc.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 SEOUL 5272
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 JUL 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <16 JUL 2003 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MIYAZAWA VISIT AND KIM TAE-CHUNG CASE
TAGS: PFOR, KS, JA, (KIM TAE-CHUNG)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006